

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2941

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 0726

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UN RQ CU

SUBJ: PUERTO RICO IN UN: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

SUMMARY: PUERTO RICO IS ISSUE IN UN NOT BECAUSE OF ITS MERITS BUT BECAUSE OF AFRICAN UNHAPPINESS OVER US VOTES ON PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES AND OTHER SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, RADICAL ARAB DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE OPPOSITION TO US MIDDLE EAST POLICIES AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, CUBAN DESIRE TO PAINT US AS "COLONIAL POWER". WE EXPECT UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24 (DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE) TO DEEPEN ITS INVOLVEMENT IN PUERTO RICAN ISSUE THIS YEAR BY AGAIN INVITING INDEPENDENTISTAS TO APPEAR BEFORE IT, BY VOTING VAGUE RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING PUERTO RICO'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE AND POSSIBLY BY RECOMMENDING THAT UN MISSION VISIT ISLAND TO INVESTIAGE ITS STATUS. VERY UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT COMMITTEE WILL MAKE ANY FORMAL RECOMMENDATION TO UNGA ON PR (E.G., RETURNING PR TO LIST OF NON SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES) OR THAT CUBA WILL ATTEMPT TO INSCRIBE PUERTO RICO DIRECTLY ON 29TH UNGA AGENDA. WE BELIEVE USG APPROACH TO COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT IN ISSUE SHOULD AVOID DRAMATIZING SIGNIFICANCE OF RESOLUTIONS WHICH MAY EMERGE FROM COMMITTEE BUT SHOULD, AT SAME TIME, MAKE CLEAR TO OUR PUERTO RICAN FRIENDS IN USG OPPOSITION TO UNNECESSARY UN INVOLVEMENT IN PUERTO RICAN AFFAIRS. SPECIFICALLY, WE RECOMMEND:

A) EARLY AND CONTINUOUS CONSULTATIONS (INITIATED PRIMARILY BY USUN) WITH COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND WITH LEADING MEMBERS

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OF PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY (PROGRESSISTAS);

B) USG LOBBYING IN NEW YORK AND SELECTED CAPITALS TO UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE TO US OF ISSUE (SPECIFIC LOBBYING SUGGESTIONS WILL FOLLOW); AND

C) ESTABLISHMENT HERE OF SMALL INFORMAL "WORKING GROUP" COMPOSED OF 3 OR 4 COMMITTEE OF 24 MEMBERS ALSO OPPOSED TO FURTHER COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT IN PUERTO RICAN ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. DEBATE ON PR AT 28TH GA WAS FOCUSED PRINCIPALLY IN FOURTH COMITE (ALTHOUGH IT WAS MENTIONED IN OTHER FORUMS), THAT GA DEMONSTRATED THAT CUBANS HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY SUCCEEDED IN MAKING PR'S STATUS A DE FACTO UN ISSUE. IT STILL IS SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS VICTORY HAS BEEN DE FACTO RATHER THAN DE JURE--THAT PR WAS NOT INSCRIBED ON EITHER UNGA AGENDA OR ON COMITE OF 24 LIST OF NSGT'S. MATTER CAME BEFORE 28TH GA AS AN ASPECT OF COMITE AND PLENARY CONSIDERATION OF OVERALL REPORT OF COMITE OF 24, IN WHICH PR WAS MENTIONED EQUIVOCALLY AND RELATIVELY BRIEFLY.

2. CONCERNING ITEM ON "FOREIGN ECONOMIC INTERESTS" IN FOURTH COMITE DEBATE NOV 14, CUBAN REP JIMENEZ CITED PROJECTED US CONSTRUCTION OF SUPERPORT IN PR AS EXAMPLE OF "COLONIAL EXPLOITATION". US REP OBJECTED, ON GROUNDS THAT REMARKS HAD NO RELEVANCE TO ITEM UNDER DISCUSSION, BUT WAS OVERRULED BY COMITE CHAIRMAN DIAZ GONZALEZ (VENEZUELA).

3. ON NOV 16 IN FOURTH COMITE, AMB WHITE SAID THAT IT WAS A MOCKERY OF A UNGA DECISION (GA RES 748 (VIII) REMOVING PR FROM LIST OF NSGT'S) TO ALLOW DISCUSSION OF PR IN A UNGA COMMITTEE. A CUBAN-US EXCHANGE FOLLOWED, AFTER WHICH CHAIRMAN UPHELD RIGHT OF ANY DELEGATE TO REFER TO ANY COLONIAL TERRITORY WHEN DISCUSSING COLONIALISM IN GENERAL. HE CITED A COMITE OF 24 DECISION WHICH ALLEGEDLY SUBMITTED QUESTION OF PR TO GA FOR ITS CONSIDERATION. AT SAME MEETING, REPS OF TANZANIA AND ALGERIA ALSO ATTACKED US RE PR. US TOOK EXCEPTION TO CHAIRMAN'S INTERPRETATION OF RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, AND RESERVED RIGHT TO REVERT TO QUESTION AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.

4. IN FOURTH COMITE ON NOV 23, GUINEAN REP ATTACKED US CONSTRUCTION OF A SUPERPORT IN PR.

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5. ON NOV 26, AGAIN IN FOURTH COMITE, ALGERIAN REP COMPLAINED OF OMISSIONS IN SUMMARY RECORD WHICH REPORTED HIS STATEMENT OF NOV 16, ADDING THAT HIS AND CHAIRMAN DIAZ GONZALES' REMARKS HAD BEEN UNFAIRLY ALTERED. (CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS, IN FACT, HAD BEEN CHANGED BY CHAIRMAN IN RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE MADE TO HIM BY AMB BENNETT.)

6. WE DEMONSTRATED IN 1973 THAT WE HAD VOTES TO KEEP PR OFF

UNGA AGENDA. CUBANS AND THEIR RADICAL "NON-ALIGNED" ALLIES ON COMITE OF 24 (IRAQ, SYRIA, TANZANIA, ETC.) WHICH MEETS BETWEEN UNGA SESSIONS, COULD WIN COMITE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION PLACING PR BACK ON LIST BUT UNDOUBTEDLY FEARED THEY LACK VOTES IN UNGA TO UPHOLD THIS DECISION. PROGNOSIS THIS YEAR, THEN, IS FOR COMITE TO DEEPEN ITS INVOLVEMENT IN PR ISSUE BY HOLDING HEARINGS ON A "WORKING PAPER" INVITING INDEPENDENTISTAS TO APPEAR AGAIN BEFORE COMITE, ADOPTING OMNIBUS RESOLUTION ON PR'S "RIGHT" TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND POSSIBLY REQUESTING THAT US INVITE COMITE TO SEND MISSION TO ISLAND TO CONTINUE "INVESTIGATION" OF PR'S STATUS" I.E., IS IT A COLONY?). IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY HOWEVER, THAT COMITE WILL MAKE ANY FORMAL RECOMMENDATION AS SUCH TO UNGA TO PR PRECISELY BECAUSE CUBA WOULD PREFER TO CLAIM "VICTORY" IN COMITE WITH OUT PUTTING THIS CLAIM TO VOTE IN UNGA PLENARY.

7. AS SEEN FROM USUN, PUERTO RICAN REACTIONS DURING PAST YEAR TO CONTINUING COMITE INVOLVEMENT IN ITS AFFAIRS HAVE BEEN CONTRARY TO WHAT WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED. INSTEAD OF UPROAR CREATED IN SAN JUAN IN SUMMER OF 1972 BY COMITE'S FIRST SUBSTANTIVE RESOLUTION IN PR, BOTH COMMONWEALTH (POPULARES) AND STATEHOOD (PROGRESSISTAS) PARTIES TOOK AUGUST 1973 APPEARANCES BEFORE COMITE OF INDEPENDENTISTA LEADERS WITH RELATIVE EQUANIMITY AND MADE LIGHT OF SUBSEQUENT RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY COMITE.

8. SEVERAL FACTORS MAY EXPLAIN LOW-KEY PR REACTION IN 1973:
A) IT WAS NOT GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION YEAR;
B) USUN (AND AMB SCALI PERSONALLY) KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH AND ENGAGED IN LENGTHY PRIOR CONSULTATIONS WITH BOTH GOV HERNANDEZ-COLON AND EX-GOV FERRE, ENCOURAGING THEM TO DOWNPLAY ISSUE;

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C) THROUGH CONSTANT BUT UNOBTRUSIVE LIAISON WITH USUN, PUERTO RICAN MEDIA (WITH EXPECTATION OF INDEPENDENTISTA NEWS-PAPER CLARIDAD) CLEARLY GRASPED REALITIES OF UN INVOLVEMENT IN ISSUE (CUBAN LOBBYING, LACK OF BALANCE IN COMITE OF 24 MEMBERSHIP, FAILURE TO COMITE TO MAKE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNGA);
D) PERHPAS MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, BY SUMMER OF 1973 NOVELTY OF UN INVOLVEMENT HAD WORN OFF AND MEDIA REALIZED INDEPENDENTISTAS WERE MERELY REPEATING IN NEW YORK ARGUMENTS THEY HAD USED FOR YEARS IN PR WITHOUT APPRECIABLE SUCCESS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 0726

9. ON OTHER HAND, DURING LAST YEAR'S GA AND COMITE OF 24 MEETINGS, REPRESENTATIVES OF T/T, ETHIOPIA, IRAN, SIERRA LEONE, INDIA, AUSTRALIA, AND MALI ALL INDICATED THEY WERE PUZZLED, TO VARYING DEGREES, WHY PUERTO RICAN GOVT AND US DEL DID NOT DEFEND THEMSELVES MORE AGAINST CUBAN/INDEPENDENTISTA ATTACKS. REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH OF THESE COUNTRIES, EXCEPTING MALI, SAID PRIVATELY THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DEFEND OUR POINT OF VIEW OF PUERTO RICO IF PUERTO RICANS THEMSELVES WERE NOT EVEN MAKING AN EFFORT TO SEEK THEM OUT TO OPPOSE HAVANA'S ACTIVITIES.

10. WE BELIEVE THAT USUN HANDLING OF ISSUE IN UN, THE, MUST BE DECIDED NOT ONLY BY VOTE COUNT CALCULATIONS IN NEW YORK BUT BY REACTION OF OUR PUERTO RICAN FRIENDS AS WELL.

11. ONE OPTION OPEN TO US IS INTENSIVE LOBBYING CAMPAIGN IN CAPITALS OF COMITE OF 24 MEMBERS, IN WHICH WE INSIST THAT COMITE REMOVE PR FROM ITS AGENDA. HOWEVER, UNLESS WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE VOTE ON A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SUCH SUPPORTERS OF CUBAN POSITION AS USSR, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BULGARIA, YUGOSLAVIA, CHINA AND MALI, THERE IS VERY LITTLE CHANCE OF DISSUADING THEM FROM SUPPORTING IRAQI-SYRIAN-TANZANIAN EFFORTS TO CONTINUE COMITE "EXAMINATION" OF ISSUE SINCE THEY WILL ARGUE, WITH SOME LOGIC, THAT THEY NOT REACHING FINAL CONCLUSION ON ISSUE. THUS, THERE ARE AT LEAST THESE NINE
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RELATIVELY SOLID VOTES IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED COMITE DEBATE OF PR. IN VIEW OF COMITE'S TRADITION OF RARELY IF EVER VOTING AGAINST EXAMINATION OF SUPPOSED COLONIAL ISSUE, MOST OF REMAINING MEMBERS OF COMITE, EVEN THOUGH PRIVATELY QUESTIONING WISDOM OF COMITE'S INVOLVEMENT IN ISSUE PERIPHERAL TO ITS MAIN CONCERN (I.E., SOUTHERN AFRICAN TERRITORIES), WOULD PROBABLY BE UNWILLING TO DO MORE THAN THEY HAVE IN PAST -- ABSTAIN. WHOLESAL LOBBYING, MOREOVER, WOULD FOCUS MEDIA ATTENTION ON WHAT THEY WOULD PORTRAY AS "CLIMACTIC VOTE" AND WOULD RESUSCITATE IN PR EMOTIONAL REACTION TO ISSUE THAT LEADERSHIP THERE APPARENTLY NOW PREPARED TO LIVE WITH. A DEFEAT FOR US POSITION IN COMITE VOTE WOULD BE INTERPRETED IN PR AS DEFEAT FOR PR GOVT OF GOV HERNANDEZ-COLON, AND WOULD PLACE UNDUE STRAIN ON EXCELLENT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP (AT LEAST AS FAR AS USUN IS CONCERNED).

12. ANOTHER OPTION OPEN TO US IS TO IGNORE TOTALLY ACTION OF COMITE ON PR EXCEPT FOR OCCASIONAL PRESS STATEMENT RIDICULING IT. THIS WOULD HAVE DANGER OF UNDERCUTTING OUR STAUNCH SUPPORTERS ON COMITE (E.G., AUSTRALIA, ETHIOPIA, IRAN AND, WE PRESUME, NEW MEMBER DENMARK) WHO HAVE BEEN TRYING (ADMITTEDLY WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS) TO LIMIT SCOPE OF COMITE'S INVOLVEMENT AND MIGHT FORCE THEM TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF RESOLUTION ON WHICH THEY HAVE HERETOFORE ABSTAINED OR VOTED AGAINST. IN ADDITION, PUERTO RICAN COMMONWEALTH AND STATEHOOD ADVOCATES MIGHT WELL REVIVE ARGUMENT HEARD IN 1972 (BUT NOT LAST YEAR) THAT THEY MUST DEFEND PR IN UN (THROUGH REPRESENTATION ON US DELEGATION OR EVEN THROUGH SEAT IN UN) BECAUSE US HAS ABDICATED ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEFENDING PR'S INTERESTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUM.

13. MOST APPROPRIATE APPROACH FOR US TO ADOPT IS ONE WHICH REAFFIRMS TO PUERTO RICANS OUR DISTRESS OVER AND CONCERN WITH GRATUITOUS UN INVOLVEMENT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME AVOIDS PITFALL OF DRAMATIZING COMITE'S VOTES ON POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND:

1) EARLY AND CONTINUOUS CONSULTATIONS, INITIATED PRIMARILY BY USUN, WITH GOV HERNANDEZ-COLON AND HIS SAN JUAN AND WASHINGTON STAFF (PARTICULARLY SECRETARY OF STATE VICTOR PONS AND LEGAL COUNSEL JOSE CABRANES), AND WITH LEADING PROGRESSISTAS. WE PLAN TO ENCOURAGE PR GOVT TO DO ITS OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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DIRECT LOBBYING WITH SELECTED MEMBERS OF COMITE, SUCH AS TRINIDAD AND VENEZUELA, BOTH IN NEW YORK AND THE CAPITALS IN ORDER TO OVERCOME IMPRESSION HELD BY SOME DELEGATES THAT INDEPENDENTISTAS ONLY POLITICAL FORCE THAT COUNTS ON ISLAND.

2) USG LOBBYING IN NEW YORK AND SELECTED CAPITALS (SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS WILL FOLLOW) TO UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE

TO US OF ISSUE AND TO REACQUAINT GOVERNMENTS WITH REALITIES OF PR SITUATION. THIS LOBBYING WOULD NOT CONFINE ITSELF TO CONVENTIONAL EAR-BENDING. WE WILL SYSTEMATICALLY PROMOTE CONTACTS BETWEEN PUERTO RICAN SPOKESMAN AND UN DIPLOMATS, AND OTHERWISE REVEAL THAT WE ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN PR EVEN THOUGH WE DESIST FROM ROUTINE DEBATE IN UN FORUMS. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE EXPOSURE OF UN DIPLOMATS TO PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF PR'S VIGOROUS AUTONOMY. WE BELIEVE APPROACH IN CAPITALS COULD BEAR DIVIDENDS PARTICULARLY IN SANTIAGO (GIVEN ANTI-CASTRO APPROACH OF NEW CHILEAN GOVT), CARACAS (GIVEN ACCION DEMOCRATICA'S LONG-STANDING TIES WITH POPULARES), NEW DELHI AND CERTAIN AFRICAN CAPITALS (INCLUDING FREETOWN).

3) ESTABLISHMENT OF INFORMAL AND CONFIDENTIAL "WORKING GROUP" HERE WITH AUSTRALIANS, ETHIOPIANS, IRANIANS, DANES, (AND POSSIBLY FIJIANS) TO CONSIDER TACTICS IN COMITE THIS YEAR AND ASCERTAIN EARLY ON WHETHER WE WILL HAVE ANY LEVERAGE.

13. PUERTO RICAN ISSUE IS IN UN NOT PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF MERITS OF CASE BUT BECAUSE OF MANY APPARENTLY EXTRANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS. TANZANIANS AND OTHER AFRICANS UNWILLING TO DO US ANY "FAVORS" BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE OUR SUPPORT OF COLONIALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND OUR OPPOSITION TO THEIR INITIATIVES ON PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES. RADICAL ARABS SEE PR AS MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING THEIR ANTAGONISM TOWARDS US MID EAST POLICIES. AT CORE OF PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS US BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA. WHENEVER CUBANS CONCEIVE IT IN THEIR INTEREST TO ADOPT MORE FLEXIBLE POLICY TOWARDS US THEY MIGHT BE LIKELY TO LESSEN THEIR EMBRACE OF SMALL INDEPENDENTIST GROUPS ON PR, PARTICULARLY IF USG, AS CONDITION OF RAPPROACHMENT, WERE TO INSIST ON THIS AS PROOF OF CUBA'S WILLINGNESS TO CEASE INTERVENTING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS.

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